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SOME ASPECTS OF PUEBLO MYTHOLOGY AND SOCIETY

By KARL A. WITTFOGEL and ESTHER S. GOLDFRANK*

1. MYTHOLOGY AND REALITY

Myths have sometimes been called tribal autobiographies;[1] sometimes they have been compared with novelistic tales.[2] The first formulation recognizes the realistic elements in all myths and folktales;[3] it leads logically to such assertions as, myths "reflect in detail the cultures of which they form part,"[4] they bring out "those points which are of interest to the people themselves,"[5] their "incidents mirror the life of the people and their occupations."[6]

The realistic foundation of all myths cannot be questioned. But, at the same time, there can be no doubt that, except in a limited number of cases, their creators have been motivated by religious and artistic impulses rather than by a "mirror"-like autobiographical intent. Many aspects of everyday life that are of interest to the people are neglected in the myths,[7] while others are either exaggerated or transformed into their opposites.[8] Whenever, therefore, the realities of life, exposed to the play of imagination, are reshaped in an artistically selective and arbitrary manner—as is frequently the case in mythology and folklore[9]—then the end result may bear a closer resemblance to the novelistic tale than to a chapter of a tribal autobiography.

The distinction is far from being purely theoretical. A scholar who believes that "social life may in part be reconstructed from these tales,"[10] must remain alive to the possible limitations of this as well as other reconstructions. Not every aspect of social life, important though it may be to the community, will fit the particular needs of a myth or folktale. And, it should be added, not every aspect of social life that has been reflected in a myth or folktale is recorded by the field worker, either because the informant considered the incident too sacred or too trivial to mention, or because the investigator did not realize its full significance. It is even possible that certain incidents which have been "mirrored" and recorded, are overlooked by the analyst (who at times is also the field worker), because he is unaware of their cultural and historical implications.

* The concept of a waterwork society as a basic type of social structure has been presented by K. A. Wittfogel in a series of publications (see n. 21). The possible implications of this concept for the analysis of the higher civilizations of the American Indians are discussed by him in Oriental Society in Asia and Ancient America (in preparation). E. S. Goldfrank, who did field work in the Rio Grande Pueblos of Laguna, Cochiti, and Isleta, has been particularly interested in the structural aspects of the social and ceremonial organization of the Southwest.

[1] Franz Boas, Tsimshian Mythology (Thirty-First Annual Report, Bureau of American Ethnology, 1909–10) 393.

[2] Franz Boas, Anthropology (Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, New York, 1937) 95; idem, Mythology and Folklore (General Anthropology, F. Boas, ed., Boston, 1938).

[3] "It seems impossible to draw a sharp line between myths and folk tales" (Boas, Mythology and Folklore 609–10). [4] Op. cit. 616.

[5] Boas, Tsimshian Mythology 393. [6] Idem, Mythology and Folklore 622.

[7] Idem, Tsimshian Mythology 395, 398, 430; idem, Kwakiutl Culture as Reflected in Mythology (Memoirs American Folklore Society 28, 1935) 3, 54.

[8] Idem, Mythology and Folklore 610. [9] Loc. cit. [10] Op. cit. 622.

deed, if the first water-course mentioned in the first Spanish report on the Pueblos was an irrigation ditch of Cibola (Zuni).[34]

Coronado's adventurous expedition (1540–42) in many ways was "a mere reconnaissance" which ascertained "little that was definite—concerning the tribes which the Spaniards met."[35] Yet those who participated brought back the report that the Pueblo Indians "cultivate the ground in the same way as in New Spain [Mexico]."[36] This somewhat vague statement is repeated more concretely in the reports of expeditions that visited the Southwest between 1581 and 1583. Espejo saw the Indians of the Rio Grande cultivate corn, beans, gourds, and *piciete* "like the Mexicans. Some of the fields are under irrigation, forming very good diverting ditches, while others are dependent upon the weather."[37] Espejo was impressed by the river irrigation near Acoma;[38] so were two other chroniclers of this expedition, Luxán,[39] and Obregon.[40] Both also provide evidence of the pre-Spanish origin of Zuni irrigation, thereby settling a point which Bandelier left open because he felt unable to prove it.[41] According to Obregon, the people of Quequina [Kwa'kina, Zuni[42]] "cultivate their lands in the wet season and irrigate them."[43] Luxán is more specific. He noticed, near the Zuni pueblo of Aguico [Hawikuh[44]] "a large marsh with many waterholes [springs ?] so that they irrigate some fields of maize with their water. *There are two canals for water* and ample space to build a city or town. . . . "[45]

Thus the historical sources confirm the claims made by archaeologists:[46] in the Pueblos of the Southwest, as in certain other parts of America, irrigation was an indigenous agricultural technique which was fully developed before

[34] Castañeda who, like the friar, accompanied Coronado to New Mexico in 1540, believes that some members of the vanguard reached Cibola and escaped. What doubts he had are concerned with other parts of the famous report. See translation of the Narrative of Castañeda (Fourteenth Annual Report, Bureau of American Ethnology, 1896) 475; cf. also Baldwin, Fray Marco's Relation 194 ff. Its truthfulness in general is upheld by Bandelier in An Outline of the Documentary History of the Zuñi Tribe (Journal of American Ethnology and Archaeology 3, 1892) 21. [35] Bandelier, Final Report I, 44.

[36] Mendoza's Letter to the King (Fourteenth Annual Report, Bureau of American Ethnology, Washington, 1896) 549.

[37] Antonio Espejo, Account of the Journey to the Provinces and Settlements of New Mexico, 1583 in volume on Spanish Exploration in the Southwest 1542–1706 (Original Narratives of Early American History, H. E. Bolton, ed., New York, 1916) 178. Cf. also Gallegos' Relation of the same expedition, in which he mentions the "irrigated corn fields" of the Pueblos; Hernan Gallegos' Relation (trans. by G. P. Hammond and A. Rey, New Mexico Historical Review 2, 1927) 346. [38] Espejo, Journey 183.

[39] Diego Perez de Luxán, Expedition into New Mexico Made by Antonio de Espejo 1582–1583 (trans. by G. P. Hammond and A. Rey, Quivera Society Publications 1, Los Angeles, 1929) 87.

[40] Obregon, History of the 16th Century Explorations in Western America (trans. by G. P. Hammond and A. Rey, Los Angeles, 1928) 325.

[41] "Of irrigation [in Zuni] I find no mention; but this is no proof that the Zuñi were unacquainted with the art" (Bandelier, Outline of Documentary History 49).

[42] Cf. Hodge, History of Hawikuh 71. [43] Obregon, History 327.

[44] Cf. Hodge, History of Hawikuh 66; see also Luxán, Expedition 92, n. 95.

[45] Luxán, Expedition 92. Italics ours.

[46] See F. W. Hodge, Handbook of the American Indians (Bulletin 30, Bureau of American Ethnology, Washington, 1907, 1910) 1:620; see also E. L. Hewett, The Chaco Canyon and Its

the arrival of the Spaniards. The first Spanish irrigation ditch in the area was built "by the colonists under Oñate" near the first capital of New Mexico,[47] not earlier than 1598.[48]

3. WATERWORKS AND WATER DEFICIENCY IN PUEBLO MYTHOLOGY

From pre-Spanish times until the present, the Pueblo Indians have relied—not completely, it is true, but as much as possible—upon irrigation for the safeguarding and prosperity of their crops. Two variants of the general ecological and waterwork pattern may be discerned: the western (Zuni and Hopi[49]), with irrigation from rivulets, springs and arroyos, and the eastern, with irrigation, in the main,[50] from the Rio Grande and its tributaries, although springs and arroyos are still used on occasion. (Laguna, until some time around 1850, drew its water from a small lake.[51])

A cursory study of Pueblo politics and conflicts described in the Spanish Archives of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and (early) nineteenth centuries[52] indicates how vital a factor irrigation was in the everyday life of the Southwest. Was this expressed with equal emphasis in the myths and tales of the Pueblos?

The answer is, no. Just as the fairy tales and miracle stories of mediaeval Europe reveal little about basic agricultural pursuits and techniques, just as modern novels and plays devote only limited space to industrial processes and activity, so Pueblo mythology is inarticulate concerning the technical and organizational aspects of its agriculture and its irrigation. Some few references can be found. A Cochiti story on the origin of death recalls the time when the Indians "planted corn with the digging stick, and they were never tired; they dug trenches to irrigate their fields."[53] In an Isleta tale, coyote and bear "all

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Monuments (Handbook of Archaeological History, University of New Mexico and School of American Research, 1936) 123 ff. Pre-Spanish origin of pueblo irrigation has been claimed by Bandelier and, recently, by Elsie Clews Parsons. See Bandelier, Historical Introduction to Studies among the Sedentary Indians of New Mexico (Papers of the Archaeological Institute of America, American Series 1, 1883) 89 ff.; idem, Final Report I, 156, n. 1; Parsons, Pueblo Indian Religion 1:18.

[47] Spanish Archives of New Mexico, R. E. Twitchell, ed. (Cedar Rapids, Ia., 1914) 1:463, quoting Torquemada, Monarquia 1:672.

[48] The capital was founded in 1598; see G. P. Hammond, Oñate and the Founding of New Mexico (New Mexico Historical Review 1, 1926) 292.

[49] We cannot discuss here the Pueblo migrations which are as frequent in historical times as they seem to have been during the pre-conquest period (see Bandelier, Final Report 3:13 ff.). In spite of their numerous movements, the Zuni, in historical times, have remained in the same general (western) locality, as did the Hopi; cf. F. W. Hodge, The Six Cities of Cibola 1581–1680 (New Mexico Historical Review 1, 1926) 480 ff.; Bandelier, Final Report 1:326 ff., 367 ff. See also notes by F. W. Hodge and C. F. Lummis to The Memorial of Fray Alonso de Benavides, 1630 (Chicago, 1916) 258 ff.

[50] In the main, not more. Rivulets and springs were used in addition to, or instead of, the Rio Grande and its tributaries whenever the local situation required it. This leads to interesting variations whose sociological implications cannot be discussed here.

[51] J. M. Gunn, Schat-chen (Albuquerque, N. M., 1917) 12–15.

[52] See The Spanish Archives of New Mexico, R. E. Twitchell, ed., 1:171, 182, 248, 252, 255 ff., 280, 282, 380, 441, 458 and passim.

[53] Ruth Benedict, Tales of the Cochiti Indians (Bulletin 98, Bureau of American Ethnology, 1931) 5.

lake) irrigation in the east, and the spring (and arroyo) irrigation in the west is reflected by the greater emphasis placed on rivers and lakes in the eastern mythology and ritual,[63] and on springs in the western.[64] To be sure, in this as in many other respects, eastern and western elements are present in both regions: eastern stories and ceremonies do not neglect the springs,[65] and Zuni religion conceives of the Zuni River as the home of the Kachina gods.[66] But the difference in general emphasis remains.

In the east, work on the irrigation ditch is the big communal event, its ceremonial setting being most fully recorded for Isleta.[67] Here it is directed by the cacique himself, who in a retreat of eight days' duration "sends his power through the ditch until it reaches the main gate of the river."[68] In Zuni, the ceremonies of both the winter and summer solstices are closely connected with springs;[69] special ceremonies are held during the earlier part of the year at the sacred springs in the farming (and irrigation) districts.[70] In Hopi, the communal cleaning of the springs is accompanied by a significant ritual,[71] and ceremonies that include visits to the springs occur during the whole ceremonial year.[72]

Even in a saturated waterwork society, magic may be used to support man's action, but the main effort is directed toward the construction of ca-

[63] See Lummis, Folk-Stories 47; Parsons, Isleta 294, 331, 342, 348; idem, Tewa Tales (Memoirs American Folklore Society 19, 1926) 160; Franz Boas, Keresan Texts (Publications American Ethnological Society 8:1, 2, 1928, 1925) 1:44, 106, 219, 220, 241 ff.; Esther Schiff Goldfrank, The Social and Ceremonial Organization of Cochiti (Memoirs American Anthropological Association 33, 1927) 96, 98; Gunn, Schat-chen 109; Leslie White, The Pueblo of Santo Domingo, New Mexico (Memoirs American Anthropological Association 43, 1935) 177; Matilda Coxe Stevenson, The Sia (Eleventh Annual Report, Bureau of American Ethnology, 1894) 43.

[64] See Stevenson, Zuni Indians 78 ff.; Ruth Benedict, Zuni Mythology (Columbia University Contributions to Anthropology 21:1, 2, 1935) 1:4 ff.; Cushing, Zuni Creation Myths 426 ff.

[65] Cf. Parsons, Isleta 366, 407; Leslie White, Acoma (Forty-Seventh Annual Report, Bureau of American Ethnology, 1932) 151; Boas, Keresan Texts 1:219, 270; White, Santo Domingo 176.

[66] Ruth Bunzel, Zuni Katcinas (Forty-Seventh Annual Report, Bureau of American Ethnology, 1932) 941.

[67] Following E. S. Goldfrank's study made in 1924 (Goldfrank, Isleta Ms.) and using the same informant, Dr. Parsons recorded again the irrigation ceremony (Isleta 318 ff.). The two versions differ in a number of respects, partly because Mrs. Goldfrank noted more economic details, Dr. Parsons more ceremonial ones, and partly because the informant, himself, deviated somewhat from his earlier account. For the methodological problems involved see E. S. Goldfrank, Isleta Variants: A Study in Flexibility (JOURNAL OF AMERICAN FOLKLORE 39:70–78, 1926). The ditch work and ceremony at Santo Domingo have been recorded by White (Santo Domingo, 141 ff.); for Cochiti cf. Goldfrank, Cochiti 73, 91 ff.; for Santa Ana see Leslie A. White, The Pueblo of Santa Ana, New Mexico (Memoirs American Anthropological Association 60, 1942) 105 ff.; also Parsons, Pueblo Indian Religion 1:295, n. According to Dr. Parsons, who calls work in the irrigation ditches the most important of all communal undertakings, there is a ritual upon opening the ditch "throughout the East" (op. cit. 1:110, 494).

[68] Goldfrank, Isleta Ms. [69] Bunzel, Introduction to Zuni Ceremonialism 514, 515.

[70] Stevenson, Zuni 43, 64, 232 ff.

[71] See Ernest Beaglehole, Notes on Hopi Economic Life (Yale University Publications in Anthropology 15, 1937) 30; cf. also Parsons, Pueblo Indian Religion 1:111.

[72] See Elsie Clews Parsons, A Pueblo Indian Journal, 1920–1921 (Memoirs American Anthropological Association 32, 1925) 57, 59, 105; see also George A. Dorsey and H. R. Voth, The Oraibi Soyal Ceremony (Field Columbian Museum Publication 55, Anthropological Series 1:1, 1901) 45, 57.

nals, dikes and sluices. The deficient waterwork society depends more fervently upon magic for what it cannot achieve technically. The Havasupai, northern neighbors of the Hopi, enjoy an adequate water supply. They declare realistically, "We have a creek to irrigate with: the Hopi plant prayer plumes in their fields because they have none and have to pray for rain all the time."[73]

4. THE POSITION OF WOMEN

According to Dr. Boas, female control of cultivation is lost when new techniques, such as "irrigation or building of terraces," are introduced.[74] As shown above, irrigation was present in both the western and eastern Pueblos, but it was more comprehensive and on a larger scale along the Rio Grande than in the west where the irrigation task remained very limited. The relative position of the sexes in the two areas reflects these differences.

The early Spanish visitors noted that in the east, "only the men attend to the work on their corn fields," while the women work at home.[75] In spite of occasional exceptions,[76] this is still the case today. In Hopi and Zuni, however, the situation was otherwise. In Hopi, in former times, women "frequently" cooperated with the men in "planting, harvesting, and gardening."[77] In Zuni, women still tend their vegetable gardens.[78] According to the folktales they did much more in early times: "Long ago," when the Zuni lived at Käkima, a girl might have her own field,[79] in which she might grow both corn and melons.[80] Another tale states that, when the corn came up, "the women went out to help hoe (as always)."[81] The fact that some gardening and some little field work is done by women in certain eastern Pueblos,[82] and that the cultivation of the fields by women in Zuni and Hopi is less common today than in former times, must not lead us to overlook the difference in development in the two regions, a difference which is vividly expressed in the tales and ceremonies.

A myth recording an early struggle between men and women occurs in an western and eastern version. In the Hopi tale, at the start of the conflict, the women "planted their corn and melons" like the men. But the women's work yielded less and less; eventually, "the women had no crops, but the men had large crops," and the women were finally forced to capitulate.[83] In the Sia

[73] Leslie Spier, Havasupai Ethnography (Anthropological Papers American Museum Natural History 29:3, 1928) 286. For the limited water supply provided by the Hopi springs see Beaglehole, Hopi Economic Life 33, 36 and passim. The Spanish campaign against Hopi in 1716 failed miserably because of lack of water; see A Campaign against the Moqui Pueblos under Governor Phelix Martinex, 1766 (New Mexico Historical Review 6, 1931) 159, n. 2; also 195, 196, 205, 212, 221, 222.

[74] Boas, General Anthropology 83.

[75] Gallegos, Relation 265; cf. also 348. Obregon's statement (op. cit. 294) that "both men and women busy themselves in the fields and houses, in spinning cloth and other necessary occupations" is indefinite on the crucial point of division of labor.

[76] See below, n. 82.

[77] Beaglehole, Hopi Economic Life 18.

[78] See Bunzel, Zuni Texts 7, 8, 10.

[79] Op. cit. 130.

[80] Op. cit. 145, 250.

[81] Benedict, Zuni Mythology 1:14.

[82] Some help by women in the fields is noted for Cochiti (Goldfrank, Cochiti 92); at Jemez and Taos, women have "small vegetable gardens," which Dr. Parsons likens to those kept by women at Zuni and at the Hopi town of Hotavila (Pueblo Indian Religion 1:39).

[83] Parsons, Tewa Tales 169 ff.; cf. idem, Pueblo Indian Religion 1:236 ff.

variant, the women claimed they could work like the men. The men left the pueblo and thrived on hunting. The women grew "very thin." After the fourth year, they asked the men to return.[84] The conflict between the different systems of agriculture, male and female, is the *leitmotiv* of the Hopi myth. The Sia version lacks any such specific emphasis.

The variations in the relative position of the sexes in agriculture are echoed in other spheres of Pueblo life. Female ownership of houses is usual in the west;[85] in Hopi, a woman even controls "that part of the clan land assigned to her, the garden plot by the spring, one or two peach orchards and the peach house."[86] In the east, there is "a tendency indeed toward male proprietorship." While houses may be owned by either men or women, male ownership predominates in Isleta, among the Tewans, and particularly in Taos.[87]

Ceremonial organization reveals a similar trend. In the east, the ceremonies are almost exclusively the concern of the men. In Hopi, women maintain a conspicuous, if secondary position in the tribe's ritualistic activities; women participate "in almost all Hopi men's ceremonies."[88] The religious role of Zuni women is definitely restricted; they are "careful not to displease their men, who do not like to have them gadding about."[89] But their comprehensive knowledge of prayers and ritual[90] may indicate that, in the not too distant past, their position was stronger than it is today.

The importance of maternal clans in Hopi,[91] their lesser significance in Zuni,[92] and their gradual replacement in the east by social organizations of a different type,[93] certainly do not mechanically reflect the basic diversities in the structure of the miniature Pueblo waterwork societies. But variations in the irrigation pattern and the kinship systems of the different pueblos show too striking a correspondence to be dismissed easily. The assumption of some kind of interrelation between them is suggested, —at least as a working hypothesis.

Attitudes toward courtship also show marked differences. In Hopi, on institutionalized occasions,[94] the girls "appear to make the advances, each girl selecting a man to give food to . . . if she gives a sweet corn loaf, it is tantamount to a proposal of marriage."[95] In San Ildefonso, "in matters of sex, men are the initiators and women are permissive."[96] Each statement makes articulate the general regional behavior.

[84] Stevenson, The Sia 42 ff.

[85] Parsons, Pueblo Indian Religion 1:5. The "western" tendency shown by Acoma and Laguna (loc. cit., n.) can only be noted here. Its discussion must be left to a further analysis.

[86] Beaglehole, op. cit. 10. [87] Parsons, Pueblo Indian Religion 1:5; idem, Isleta 234.

[88] H. R. Voth, The Oraibi Powamu Ceremony (Field Columbian Museum Publication 61, Anthropological Series 3:2, 1901) 89, n.; see also 92 ff., 110, 111; also Dorsey and Voth, Oraibi Soyal Ceremony 39, 41, 44, 48, 52 ff.; and Parsons, Pueblo Indian Journal 13, 17, 18, 45, 102.

[89] Bunzel, Introduction to Zuni Ceremonialism 543 ff.

[90] Op. cit. 544. [91] Parsons, Pueblo Indian Religion 2:863.

[92] A. L. Kroeber, Zuni Kin and Clan (Anthropological Papers, American Museum Natural History 18:2, 1917) 49.

[93] For a distribution of social factors, see W. D. Strong, An Analysis of Southwestern Society (American Anthropologist 29:1–61, 1927).

[94] Parsons, Pueblo Indian Journal 65. [95] Parsons, Pueblo Indian Religion 1:41.

[96] W. Whitman, The San Ildefonso of New Mexico (Acculturation in Seven American Indian Tribes, R. Linton, ed.) 424.